

CLAIMS

1. A service utilization ID number settlement system for the provision of services based on an amount of money paid in advance by a user, and comprising:

a settlement terminal device, configured so as to read an ID number recorded on the media at the time of settlement for prescribed media, to cause the input of balance information equivalent to the amount of money paid in association with the ID number, and to transmit said ID number in association with said balance information; and,

a settlement authentication device, configured to be able to store said balance information in association with said ID number when the ID number has been transmitted; to judge whether service can be provided, referencing said ID number and balance information, when there is a request for service from an information terminal device operated by a user; and, when it is judged that service can be provided, to permit provision of service to said information terminal device, and to subtract from the balance information an amount of money equivalent to the service amount.

2. A service utilization ID number settlement system for the provision of services based on an amount of money paid in advance by a user, and comprising:

a settlement terminal device, configured so as to read, at the time of settlement for prescribed media, an ID number

recorded on the media, to cause the input of balance information equivalent to the amount of money paid and service specification information specifying a service in association with the ID number, and to transmit said ID number in association with said balance information and said service specification information;

a settlement management device, configured so as to reference said service specification information when an ID number is transmitted from said settlement terminal device, and to transmit the ID number and balance information to a settlement authentication device associated with the service specified by the service specification information; and,

one or more settlement authentication devices, configured so as to store ID numbers transmitted from said settlement management device in association with said balance information; when there is a request for service from an information terminal device operated by a user, to judge whether service can be provided, referring to said ID number and balance information; and, when it is judged that service can be provided, to permit provision of service to said information terminal device, and to subtract from the balance information an amount of money equivalent to the service amount.

3. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 2, wherein:

recorded on the media, to cause the input of balance information equivalent to the amount of money paid in association with the ID number, and to transmit said ID number in association with said balance information;

a settlement management device, configured such that, when an ID number and balance information are transmitted from said settlement terminal device, the settlement management device validates the ID number and stores the ID number in association with the balance information, and, when there is a query from any settlement authentication device as to whether a specific ID number is validated, the settlement management device judges as to whether said ID number is validated, and transmits the result together with the associated balance information; and,

one or more settlement authentication devices, configured so as to store sub-ID numbers in association with balance information; to judge, when there is a request for service together with a specific ID number from an information terminal device operated by a user, as to whether service can be provided according to whether the specific ID number matches said sub-ID number or an ID number stored in said settlement management device; and, to generate a new sub-ID number when the specific ID number does not match a sub-ID number.

5. A service utilization ID number settlement system for the provision of services based on an amount of money paid in advance by a user, and comprising:

a settlement terminal device, configured so as to read, at the time of settlement for prescribed media, an ID number recorded on the media, to cause the input of balance information equivalent to the amount of money paid in association with the ID number, and to transmit to said settlement management device said ID number in association with said balance information;

a service selection device, configured so as to receive an ID number as well as service specification from an information terminal device operated by a user, and to transmit service specification information specifying the service together with individual balance information allocated to the service;

a settlement management device, configured such that, when an ID number has been transmitted from said settlement terminal device and in addition thereto said service specification information and individual balance information have been transmitted from said service selection device, the settlement management device transmits individual balance information and the ID number corresponding to service specification information to each of the settlement authentication devices corresponding to the one or more services specified by the service specification information; and,

from an information terminal device operated by a user; and, when it is judged that service can be provided, to permit provision of service to said information terminal device, and to subtract from the balance information of an amount of money equivalent to the service amount.

Sub A 7. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claims 1 through 6, wherein, when judging whether said service can be provided, if the ID number has not been validated, or the amount of money equivalent to the service amount to be provided is smaller than the current balance, said settlement authentication device prohibits the provision of the service.

8. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 7, wherein:

said settlement authentication device is configured to store user-specific information identifying the user associated with said ID number;

when a new ID number is issued, the user-specific information associated with the new ID number is referenced, a judgment is made as to whether there exists an ID number already registered for the same user, and if there exists an ID number already registered, the new ID number is associated with the already-registered ID number and stored, and the new ID number is validated; and,

when a judgment is made as to whether said service can be provided, if the amount of money equivalent to the service amount to be provided is larger than the sum of the balance associated with the already-registered ID number and the balance associated with the new ID number, provision of the service is prohibited.

9. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 7, wherein:

said settlement authentication device is configured to store user-specific information identifying the user associated with said ID number; and,

when a new ID number is issued, the user-specific information associated with the new ID number is referenced, a judgment is made as to whether there exists an ID number already registered for the same user, and if there exists an ID number already registered, the balance associated with the already-registered ID number is added to the balance associated with the new ID number, the new ID number is validated, and the balance information associated with the already-registered ID number is deleted.

10. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 9, wherein said media is supplied in the form of a plurality of separable sheets, bearing different ID numbers.

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11. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to any one of claims 1 through 10, wherein, when judging whether said service can be provided, if the current balance less the amount of money equivalent to the service amount to be provided is smaller than a reference amount of money, said settlement authentication device causes the transmission of warning information to said information terminal device.

12. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 1, wherein:

said media is a slip on which are recorded said ID number and other information, and which specifies the amount of money to be paid by the user; and,

the settlement terminal device can input the ID number recorded on the slip and other information, and can transmit the input ID number and other information, and the fact that the user has paid said amount of money.

13. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claim 12, wherein said slip is supplied in the form of a plurality of slips on a single sheet, bearing different ID numbers, and which can be cut away.

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14. The service utilization ID number settlement system according to claims 4 or 5, wherein the ID number used in said

